

3
MOTHERS' PREFERENCES FOR THE CLOTHING
OF GIRLS THREE TO SIX YEARS OF AGE*

Excerpted from an unpublished thesis by Naomi Marie Johnson, Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas, 1949, for use of Extension Clothing Specialists. A summary prepared by the author.

Introduction

This study was made for these reasons: (1) To learn the preferences of a selected group of 100 mothers for the clothing of girls three to six years of age; (2) To determine how present wardrobes were provided; (3) To record the variations in choices of clothing for girls as influenced by income; and (4) To gain a better understanding of the preferences of mothers for style features, fabric and color in children's clothing.

Information was obtained by interviewing 100 mothers all of whom were Home Demonstration Clothing Leaders from counties in the southwest and northwest districts in Kansas. A schedule was prepared to aid the interviewer record preferences for clothing as well as general information about each family.

Findings

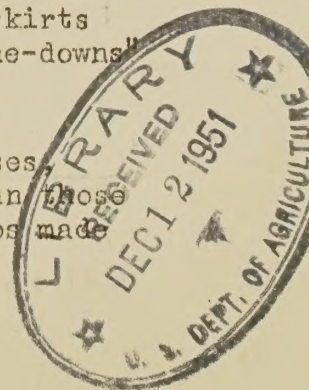
The 100 families included in this study were divided according to income into low, middle and high income groups. There were 33 families in the low, 49 in the middle and 19 in the high income groups. All of the families had a father, mother and one or more children.

Three-fourths or more of the mothers in all income groups reported that the children's wardrobes contained dresses, underwear, anklets, shoes, coats, snowsuits, blouses, pinafores, pajamas, waterproof footwear, head coverings, mittens and bedroom slippers. Dresses, underwear, anklets and shoes were the only items included in all the wardrobes. Items reported by one-fourth or less of all groups were raincoats, raincoats, nightgowns, jeans, gloves, muffs and stockings.

A total of 19 items of clothing was received as gifts by some children in all groups. Purses, handkerchiefs, mittens, and gloves accounted for the largest percentages of gift items. Children in the middle and low income groups received about twice as many clothing items as gifts as did those in the high income group.

Mothers interviewed were making over only a few garments for their children. Coats, snowsuits, blouses, jumpers, bib-slacks, overalls, skirts and slips were being made from other garments. The use of "hand-me-downs" was relatively small.

The study showed that in all income groups the percentage of blouses, dresses, jumpers, pinafores and slips made at home was greater than those bought ready-made. The mothers in the low and middle income groups made



more jackets, toppers, skirts, sunsuits, pajamas and gowns than bought them. More mothers in the high income group bought these same garments than made them with the exception of sunsuits. As many mothers in this group made sunsuits as bought them ready-made. The larger percentage bought ready-made rainwear, snowsuits, coveralls, jeans, overalls, bib-slacks, polo shirts, bathing suits and sweaters for their daughters' wardrobes. The larger percentage of mothers in the low and high income groups bought coats, but in the middle income group, the same percentage bought coats as made them. The majority of all accessories were bought ready-made.

Mothers interviewed wanted the following garment design and style features: Two-piece snowsuit; princess coat; pull-on tee shirt; cardigan sweater; two-piece pajamas; set-in sleeves; blouse with front opening; and dresses that open in the back. The mothers' choice for button fastenings exceeded any others named.

Cotton was preferred for most items of wearing apparel. Percentage preference for wool was greatest for sweaters, then in descending order for skirts, coats, snowsuits, and bathing suits. Mothers experienced difficulty naming fabrics they desired for outer wraps. Fabric finishes were mentioned by few. Many did not tell the kind of leather preferred for children's shoes.

Red and blue was preferred for outer and inner garments more often than other colors. Exceptions were white for blouses and tee shirts. For nightwear and underwear, white was the choice for gowns, slips and underwear; pastels for pajamas; and blue and pink for robes or housecoats. Choices of color for shoes were white, black or brown. Colors most often preferred for accessories were red and white.

Summary

There is little difference in the preferences for types of apparel for children from one income group to another. Made-over garments and "hand-me-down" garments are of minor importance in children's wardrobes. Items for children's wardrobes bought ready-made was greater than those made at home.